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Colorado Potatoes on Their Way to North Korea

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COLORADO POTATOES ON THEIR WAY TO NORTH KOREA
U.S. RELIEF AGENCIES LAUNCH POTATO PROJECT FOR FAMINE RELIEF

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April 28, 1999, DENVER, Colo. -- Today 100 metric tons of Russet Nugget seed potatoes from the San Luis Valley in Colorado are being loaded onto a Tower Airlines 747 at Denver International Airport en route to North Korea. This shipment of seed potatoes is part of a larger initiative newly launched by a consortium of eight U.S. humanitarian relief and development agencies, including Church World Service. These U.S. seed potatoes will help increase potato production in North Korea.

The loading of the seed potatoes began at 2:00 PM MDT Wednesday afternoon. The plane, contracted on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is due to depart around 5:00 PM MDT.

This initiative consists of a total of 1,000 metric tons of seed potatoes that have been purchased by eight U.S. relief agencies and will be distributed on farms throughout several provinces in North Korea. Additionally, a 100,000 metric ton food-for-work program, with commodities provided by USAID and the United States Department of Agriculture, will both support the seed potato initiative and be targeted to the neediest areas of the country. The 100,000 metric tons of food marks the first bilateral aid given by the United States to North Korea.

Since 1995, Church World Service, the humanitarian response ministry of the National Council of Churches, has provided more than $2.8 million worth of rice, corn, barley, beef, cooking oil, antibiotics, blankets, and other assistance to alleviate the famine related suffering in North Korea.

Agencies involved in this undertaking are Church World Service, Adventist Development and Relief, Amigos Internacionales, The Carter Center, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Korean American Sharing Movement and Mercy Corps International.

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